

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

Subjects of Interest to the General Reader.

Financial Legislation Demanded By Organized Labor—Tariff Bill Errors, and Their Effects.

Representative Hartman of Montana presented in the house one day last week resolutions for the free coinage of silver which are regarded by the free silver advocates as one of the most significant expression in favor of their doctrine, which has been elicited by the agitation of the past year. The resolutions have been considered and adopted during the present session by the most powerful labor organizations of the country, are strongly worded and are signed by the chief officers of the various unions. The signers are J. D. Sovereign, grand master workman, and John W. Hayes, secretary and treasurer of the Knights of Labor; Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor; Marion Butler, president of the National Farmers' Alliance; Henry H. Trenor, president, and P. F. McGuire, secretary, of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners; P. M. Arthur, chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; C. A. Rollinson, president of the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association; Frank Sargent, Grand Master Workman, and F. W. Arnold, secretary and treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and John McBride, president of the United Mineworkers of America.

Accompanying the resolutions is an address to the members of organized labor and all other producers and toilers throughout the United States, which led to their adoption.

The address declares "That in view of the general distress at a time when granaries are full, and in the natural order of things producers and toilers should be enjoying the fruits of their labors, it seems that the time has come for united action on the part of those who create the wealth of the country."

One of the causes which brought about this condition, the address says, is the departure from the wise bimetallic financial principles of Washington, Jefferson and Hamilton and the substitution of the monometallic policy dictated by the European money holders and their American allies.

A review of the financial legislation is given to show what part was enacted in the interest of the producing as well as of the non-producing classes. The proposition is set forth that before the demonetization of silver 3,500 bushels of wheat or 35,000 pounds of cotton equalled the annual pay of a senator or congressman, while today 10,000 bushels of

wheat or 100,000 pounds of cotton barely suffices; that formerly 35,000 bushels of wheat or 350,000 pounds of cotton would have paid the salary of the president, while today he receives the equivalent of 100,000 bushels of wheat or 1,000,000 pounds of cotton, and the same proportion applies to all other fixed salaries and incomes.

The demoralization of the food producing section is said to have caused the manufacturers to lose the markets for their goods so that hundreds of thousands of workmen have been thrown out of employment and the demonetization of half of the world's volume of money makes it comparatively easy for capitalists to corner and manipulate the other half.

In the review of financial legislation it is charged that all acts since the civil war have been in the interest of the bondholders and against the producers, and the Sherman law is said to have been repealed at the demand of European financiers, although a grand fight was made by the people's representatives.

The resolutions are as follows:

We demand of the present congress the immediate return to the money of the constitution as established by our fathers, by restoring the free and unlimited coinage of silver at a ratio of 16 to 1, the coins of both metals to be equally full legal tender for all debts, public and private as before the fraudulent demonetization of silver in 1873.

We also condemn the issuance of a national debt in the time of peace and the use of interest bearing bonds at any time.

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Representative Johnson of North Dakota also introduced the same day a bill providing for the unlimited coinage of silver, although his bill does not provide for the free coinage of the white metal. In 1876 a joint resolution was passed limiting the amount of subsidiary coins to be coined in one year, plus the amount already in circulation, to \$50,000,000. The object of Johnson's bill is to remove this limitation and give the secretary of the treasury authority to coin as many fractional pieces of silver as he may desire. No limit is to be placed on the amount in circulation.

Johnson says he was led to introduce this bill because of many complaints he and his fellow congressmen from the western states had received of the scarcity of subsidiary coins. The bill would very likely receive some attention immediately if it were not so near the end of the session, but it will probably be taken up next winter.

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Additional errors in punctuation in the new tariff bill are constantly being discovered by the treasury officials. An important mistake has just been found in section 5 of the free list. The section

provides that articles of foreign manufacture must be stamped with the name of their origin, and then says:

"And until so marked, stamped, branded or labeled, they shall not be delivered to the importer, should any article of imported merchandise be marked, stamped, etc., in excess of the quantity exactly contained in such article."

It is assumed that there should have been a period established between the words "importer" and "should," but as there is none the paragraph as it stands is unintelligible and may lead to serious embarrassments in its execution.

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The Gorman compromise tariff bill is to become a law. That at least is the fixed opinion of ex-Secretary of War Stephen B. Elkins, who had it direct from Chairman William L. Wilson.

"You see," said Mr. Elkins, as he sat in his office, "I met Wilson at the Pennsylvania depot the other day and put the question to him direct. Now, I have forgotten whether he said the president would sign the bill or allow it to become a law without his signature, but he said positively it would become a law. He spoke with such positiveness that I was forced to the conclusion that he had excellent authority for the assertion."

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